The Phantom of the Opera

By Gaston Leroux

Author of "The Mystery of the Yellow Room," etc.

The Most Daring Sensation Novel of the Century

The Romance of a "Spirit" That Haunted the Paris Opera-House; Spreading Terror, Working Miracles and Making Ghostly Love. A Story That One Cannot Put Down Unfinished.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

During a gala performance at the Paris Opera the chorus girls are panic-stricken at sight of a ghastly skeleton figure in correct evening dress that stalks through the corridors. There have been hitherto many rumors of a "ghost" that haunts the Opera House. A scene shifter's body is found hanging that night in a cellar of the building. The man's death is ascribed to the ghost. In the audience at the gala performance are the Comte de Chagny and his younger brother, the Vicomte Raoul de Chagny. Raoul is a naval officer on furlough and is about to join an Arctic expedition.

CHAPTER II.

(Continued.)

The New Margarita.

THE shyness of the sailor lad—I was almost saying his innocence—was remarkable. He seemed to have but just left the women's apron-strings. As a matter of fact, petted as he was by his two sisters and his old aunt, he had retained from this purely feminine education manners that were almost candid and stamped with a charm that nothing had yet been able to sully. He was a little over twenty-one years of age and looked eighteen. He had a small, fair mustache, beautiful blue eyes and a complexion like a girl's.

Philippe spoiled Raoul. To begin with, he was very proud of him and pleased to foresee a glorious career for his junior in the navy in which one of their ancestors, the famous Chagny de La Roche, had held the rank of Admiral. He took advantage of the young man's leave of absence to show him Paris, with all its luxurious and artistic delights.

The count considered that, at Raoul's age, it is not good to be too good. Philippe himself had a character that was very well balanced in work and pleasure alike; his demeanor was always faultless; and he was incapable of setting his brother a bad example. He took him with him wherever he went. He even introduced him to the foyer of the ballet.

I know that the count was said to be "on terms" with Sorelli. But it could hardly be reckoned as a crime for this nobleman, a bachelor, with plenty of leisure, especially since his sisters were settled, to come and spend an hour or two after dinner in the company of a dancer, who, though not so very, very witty, had the finest eyes that ever were seen. And, besides, there are places where a true Parisian, when he has the rank of the Comte de Chagny, is bound to show himself; and at that time the foyer of the ballet at the opera was one of those places.

Lastly, Philippe would perhaps not have taken his brother behind the scenes of the opera if Raoul had not been the first to ask him, repeatedly renewing his request with a gentle obstinacy which the count remembered at a later date.

On that evening Philippe, after applauding the Daae, turned to Raoul and saw that he was quite pale.

"Don't you see," said Raoul, "that the woman's fainting?"

"You look like fainting yourself," said the Count. "What's the matter?"

But Raoul had recovered himself and was standing up.

"Let's go and see," he said; "she never sang like that before."

The Count gave his brother a curious smiling glance and seemed quite pleased. They were soon at the door leading from the house to the stage. Numbers of subscribers were slowly making their way through. Raoul tore his gloves without knowing what he was doing and Philippe had much too kind a heart to laugh at him for his impatience.

But he now understood why Raoul was absent-minded when spoken to and why he always tried to turn every conversation to the subject of the opera.

They reached the stage and pushed through the crowd of gentlemen, scene-shifters, supers and chorus girls, Raoul leading the way, feeling that his heart no longer belonged to him, his face set with passion, while Count Philippe followed him with difficulty and continued to smile. At the back of the stage Raoul had to stop before the inrush of the little troop of ballet girls who blocked the passage which he was trying to enter.

More than one chaffing phrase darted from little made-up lips, to which he did not reply; and at last he was able to pass, and dived into the semi-darkness of a corridor ringing with the name of "Daae! Daae!"

The count was surprised to find that Raoul knew the way. He had never taken him to Christine's himself and came to the conclusion that Raoul must have gone there alone while the count stayed talking in the foyer with Sorelli, who often asked him to wait until it was her time to "go on" and sometimes handed him the little gaiters in which she ran down from her dressing room to preserve the spotlessness of her satin dancing shoes and her flesh-colored tights. Sorelli had an excuse; she had lost her mother.

Postponing his usual visit to Sorelli for a few minutes the count followed his brother down the passage that led to Daae's dressing room and saw that it had never been so crammed as on that evening, when the whole house seemed excited by her success and also by her fainting fit.

For the girl had not yet come to, and the doctor of the theatre had just arrived at the moment when Raoul entered at his heels. Christine, therefore, received the first aid of the one, while opening her eyes in the arms of the other. The count and many more remained crowding in the doorway.

"Don't you think, doctor, that those gentlemen had better clear the room?" asked Raoul coolly. "There's no breathing here."

"You're quite right," said the doctor.

And he sent every one away, except Raoul and the maid, who looked at Raoul with eyes of the most undisguised astonishment. She had never seen him before and yet dared not question him; and the doctor imagined that the young man was only acting as he did because he had the right to. The viscount, therefore, remained in the room watching Christine as she slowly returned to life, while even the joint managers, Debienne and Poligny, who had come to offer their sympathy and congratulations, found themselves thrust into the passage, among the crowd of dandies. The Comte de Chagny, who was one of those standing outside, laughed:

"Oh, the rogue, the rogue!" And he added, under his breath: "Those youngsters with their schoolgirl airs! So he's a Chagny after all!"

He turned to go to Sorelli's dressing-room, but met her on the way, with her little troop of trembling ballet girls, as we have seen.

Meanwhile, Christine Daae uttered a deep sigh, which was answered by a groan. She turned her head, saw Raoul and started. She looked at the doctor, on whom she bestowed a smile, then at her maid, then at Raoul again.

"Monsieur," she said, in a voice not much above a whisper, "who are you?"

"Mademoiselle," replied the young man, kneeling on one knee and pressing a fervent kiss on the diva's hand, "I am the little boy who went into the sea to rescue your scarf."

Christine again looked at the doctor and the maid; and all three began to laugh.

Raoul turned very red and stood up.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "since you are pleased not to recognize me, I should like to say something to you in private, something very important."

"When I am better, do you mind?" And her voice shook. "You have been very good."

"Yes, you must go," said the doctor, with his pleasantest smile. "Leave me to attend to mademoiselle."

"I am not ill now," said Christine suddenly, with strange and unexpected energy.

She rose and passed her hand over her eyelids.

"Thank you, Doctor. I should like to be alone. Please go away, all of you. Leave me. I feel very restless this evening."

The doctor tried to make a short protest, but, perceiving the girl's evident agitation, he thought the best remedy was not to thwart her. And he went away, saying to Raoul, outside:

"She is not herself to-night. She is usually so gentle."

Then he said good night and Raoul was left alone. The whole of this part of the theatre was now deserted. The farewell ceremony was no doubt taking place in the foyer of the ballet. Raoul thought that Daae might go to it and he waited in the silent solitude, even hiding in the favoring shadow of a doorway. He felt a terrible pain at his heart and it was of this that he wanted to speak to Daae without delay.

Suddenly the dressing-room door opened and the maid came out by herself, carrying bundles. He stopped her and asked how her mistress was. The woman laughed and said that she was quite well, but that he must not disturb her, for she wished to be left alone. And she passed on. One idea alone filled Raoul's burning brain: of course, Daae wished to be left alone for him! Had he not told her that he wanted to speak to her privately?

Hardly breathing, he went up to the dressing-room and, with his ear to the door to catch her reply, prepared to knock. But his hand dropped. He had heard a man's voice in the dressing-room, saying, in a curiously masterful tone:

"Christine, you must love me!"

And Christine's voice, infinitely sad and trembling, as though accompanied by tears, replied:

"How can you talk like that? When I sing only for you!"

Raoul leaned against the panel to ease his pain. His heart, which had seemed gone forever, returned to his breast and was throbbing loudly. The whole passage echoed with its beating and Raoul's ears were deafened. Surely if his heart continued to make such a noise they would hear it inside, they would open the door and the young man would be turned away in disgrace. What a position for a Chagny! To be caught listening behind a door! He took his heart in his two hands to make it stop.

"Are you very tired?"

"Oh, to-night I gave you my soul and I am dead!" Christine replied.

"Your soul is a beautiful thing, child," replied the grave man's voice, "and I thank you. No emperor ever received so fair a gift. The angels wept to-night."

Raoul heard nothing after that. Nevertheless, he did not go away, but, as though he feared lest he should be caught, he returned to his dark corner determined to wait for the man to leave the room. At one and the same time he had learned what love meant, and hatred. He knew that he loved. He wanted to know whom he hated.

To his great astonishment the door opened and Christine Daae appeared, wrapped in furs, with her face hidden in a lace veil, alone. She closed the door behind her, but Raoul observed that she did not lock it. She passed him. He did not even follow her with his eyes, for his eyes were fixed on the door, which did not open again.

When the passage was once more deserted, he crossed it, opened the door of the dressing-room, went in and shut the door. He found himself in absolute darkness. The gas had been turned out.

"There is some one here!" said Raoul with his back against the closed door, in a quivering voice. "What are you hiding for?"

All was darkness and silence. Raoul heard only the sound of his own breathing. He quite failed to see that the indiscretion of his conduct was exceeding all bounds.

"You shan't leave this until I let you!" he exclaimed. "If you don't answer you are a coward! But I'll expose you!"

And he struck a match. The blaze lit up the room. There was no one in the room! Raoul, first turning the key in the door, lit the gas jets. He went into the dressing closet, opened the cupboards, hunted about, felt the walls with his moist hands. Nothing!

"Look here!" he said, aloud. "Am I going mad?"

He stood for ten minutes listening to the gas flaring in the silence of the empty room; lover though he was, he did not even think of stealing a ribbon that would have given him the perfume of the woman he loved. He went out, not knowing what he was doing nor where he was going. At a given moment in his wayward progress, an icy draught struck him in the face. He found himself at the bottom of a staircase, down which, behind him, a procession of workmen were carrying a sort of stretcher, covered with a white sheet.

"Which is the way out, please?" he asked of one of the men.

"Straight in front of you, the door is open. But let us pass."

Pointing to the stretcher, he asked mechanically:

"What's that?"

The workmen answered:

"'That' is Joseph Buquet, who was found in the third cellar, hanging between a farm house and a scene from the Roi de Lahore."

He took off his hat, fell back to make room for the procession and went out.

CHAPTER III.

The Mysterious Reason.

DURING this time the farewell ceremony was taking place. I have already said that this magnificent function was being given on the occasion of the retirement of M. Debienne and M. Poligny, who had determined to "die game," as we say nowadays. They had been assisted in the realization of their ideal though melancholy programme by all that counted in the social and artistic world of Paris.

All these people met after the performance in the foyer of the ballet, where Sorelli waited for the arrival of the retiring managers with a glass of champagne in her hand and a little prepared speech at the tip of her tongue. Behind her the members of the corps de ballet, young and old, discussed the events of the day in whispers and exchanged discreet signals with their friends, a noisy crowd of whom surrounded the supper tables arranged along the slanting floor.

A few of the dancers had already changed into ordinary dress, but most of them wore their skirts of gossamer gauze; and all had thought it the right thing to put on a special face for the occasion—all, that is, except little Jammes, whose fifteen summers—happy age!—seemed already to have forgotten the ghost and the death of Joseph Buquet. She never ceased to laugh and chatter, to hop about and play practical jokes, until MM. Debienne and Poligny appeared on the steps of the foyer, when she was severely called to order by the impatient Sorelli.

Everybody remarked that the retiring managers looked cheerful, as is the Paris way. None will ever be a true Parisian who has not learned to wear a mask of gayety over his sorrows and one of sadness, boredom or indifference over his inward joy. You know that one of your friends is in trouble; do not try to console him; he will tell you that he is already comforted; but should he have met with good fortune, be careful how you congratulate him; he thinks it so natural that he is surprised that you should speak of it.

In Paris our lives are one masked ball, and the foyer of the ballet is the last place in which two men so "knowing" as M. Debienne and M. Poligny would have made the mistake of betraying their grief, however genuine it might be. And they were already smiling rather too broadly upon Sorelli, who had begun to recite her speech, when an exclamation from that little madcap of a Jammes broke the smile of the managers so brutally that the expression of distress and dismay that lay beneath it became apparent to all eyes:

"The Opera ghost!"

Jammes yelled these words in a tone of unspeakable terror, and her finger pointed, among the crowd of dandies, to a face so pallid, so lugubrious and so ugly, with two such deep black cavities under the straddling eyebrows, that the death's head in question immediately scored a huge success.

"The Opera ghost! The Opera ghost!"

Everybody laughed and pushed his neighbor and wanted to offer the Opera ghost a drink, but he was gone. He had slipped through the crowd; and the others vainly hunted for him, while two old gentlemen tried to calm little Jammes and while little Giry stood screaming like a peacock.

Sorelli was furious; she had not been able to finish her speech; the managers had kissed her, thanked her and run away as fast as the ghost himself. No one was surprised at this, for it was known that they were to go through the same ceremony on the floor above, in the foyer of the singers, and that finally they were themselves to receive their personal friends, for the last time, in the great lobby outside the managers' office, where a regular supper would be served.

Here they found the new managers, M. Armand Moncharmin and M. Firmin Richard, whom they hardly knew; nevertheless, they were lavish in protestations of friendship and received a thousand flattering compliments in reply, so that those of the guests who had feared that they had a rather tedious evening in store for them at once put on brighter faces. The supper was almost gay, and a particularly clever speech of the representative of the government, mingling the glories of the past with the successes of the future, caused the greatest cordiality to prevail.

The retiring managers had already handed over to their successors the two tiny master-keys which opened all the doors—thousands of doors—of the Opera house. And those little keys, the object of general curiosity, were being passed from hand to hand, when the attention of some of the guests was diverted by their discovery, at the end of the table, of that strange, wan and fantastic face, with the hollow eyes, which had already appeared in the foyer of the ballet and been greeted by little Jammes' exclamation:

"The Opera ghost!"

(To Be Continued.)

A Head of Fire Came Toward Them.

The New Plays

"Jumping Jupiter" Doesn't Leap to Success.

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

WHEN it comes to "Jumping Jupiter," the saddest shine of all is that we can't read the answer in the star.

Richard Carle was compelled last night to shine in the obscure, rather than the reflected, glory of the book written by himself and Sydney Rosenfeld. Merry-minded theatre-goers have long ago learned better than to hitch their automobiles to a star-part designed by the Rosenfeld teamster. Carle himself may be all right down to his white spats, but when he sits down to write he should first provide himself with dark green glasses and then take every precaution to keep out the pale light of Rosenfeld. It was the words, even more than the music, that made life sad at the New York Theatre last night.

Karl Hoschna knows how to write light music that runs from your toes to your knees, but he evidently forgot the trick in his attempt to make "Jumping Jupiter" active. Here, as a dull matter of fact, is a musical piece that hasn't even a tune to keep it going. Its music isn't worth humming, and as for its book—well, Messrs. Carle and Rosenfeld might well have been up to a funnier and better business.

Carle himself is to be condemned only as one of the authors of "Jumping Jupiter." Cheerily, even smilingly, he tried to rise above the dismal work he had helped make for himself. Like the savage musical comedy warrior that he is he showed his teeth and bit into supposedly choice morsels that may have given forth the juice of humor in regions where the tall pine flourishes while the reluctant maple is getting up its courage to yield the nourishing sap.

RICHARD CARLE.

But the "book" ran dry. That's the beginning and the end of the inexplicable tale that was reeled off. It made "Naughty Marietta" seem like a natural flow of wit and humor by comparison. We were obliged to sit and listen to things in which there was not a ghost of a smile, only the grinning skeleton of musical comedy dead and gone. And this sort of experience is paralyzing. It has the effect of giving you writer's cramp several joints above the elbow. You simply can't write about it and feel alive at the same time. Inch by inch you die in your chair.

Just as I had given up hope of seeing Mr. Carle do something new he—did it! Without the flourish that usually sets a new fashion, he drew his handkerchief from his shoe top instead of from his coatsleeve.

(You know, of course, it is the height of vulgarity for a man to carry his handkerchief in his pocket.) Evidently Mr. Carle had given much thought to this important subject. With the air of one who has seen the world and put it down for what it is worth, he drew his handkerchief from his shoe and in a flash, as it were, wiped out the wordy, tedious Rosenfeld. Aside from this moment, significant in its humor and revolutionary in its example, there was little for Mr. Carle to do that he had not done before. He repeated himself both religiously and historically, from spats to forehead. It goes without saying that his view of life was taken through glasses that seemed to reflect the wisdom of the musical comedy ages. In the light of it all it seemed wonderful that Mr. Carle could remain so young.

While Richard was himself, Edna Wallace Hopper seemed almost as strange as some of the visitors who get into the newspapers. In a monkey-hat and accents strained she neither looked nor sounded like her old self. She was self-conscious and chorus-girly. All her training had evidently gone for nothing. Her affectations quite settled her before she began trying to sing, and the height of her success was reached when strong arms raised her in a chair and her feet kicked up excitement in which the audience refused to join.

Like Miss Hopper, there was nothing in "Jumping Jupiter" to grow excited about. It was deadly.

Dumbwaiter Dialogues

By Alma Woodward

Just Oysters.

Scene: The Chatterton Arms.
Characters: Mrs. Crane, Mrs. Davis and Boy.
(Boy rings Mrs. Crane's bell.)

MRS. C. (answering)—Well?

Boy—Here's yer oysters from Mulligan's.

Mrs. C. (pitching in)—Well, it's about time you brought them. If they had come a little later I would have sent them back.

Boy (grumbling)—Aw, I bin here t'ree times already an' no one didn't answer de bell!

Mrs. C.—Why, I only went around the corner and I wasn't gone more than ten minutes. I'm afraid you're exaggerating, boy.

(The rattle of the dumbwaiter drowns her reproof.)

Boy (shrilly)—High enough?

Mrs. C.—Just wait a minute, please. I want to see whether they've sent me the right quantity. (Pause.) Why! Do you think I'm going to take these. All the liquor is gone and the oysters are all down in the bottom of the box!

Boy (calmly)—Well, they bin in de box four hours, an' dey only guarantee dem boxes waterproof fer one hour. I guess de juice is leaked out!

Mrs. C. (impatiently)—I wanted these oysters for oyster stew. I can't use them without liquor, so take them back.

Boy (willing to arbitrate)—If I tote 'em back an' has some more juice slugged on 'em will you keep 'em then?

Mrs. C. (undecided)—Well, I think I will. I——

Mrs. D. (coming upon the scene)—Good afternoon, Mrs. Crane; having some trouble with the fish market?

Mrs. C. (anxious to confide)—I ordered a dozen and a half oysters for oyster stew and they've sent me the oysters in a damp box with all the liquor poured off!

Boy (from the depths)—It wasn't poured off; it leaked off!

Mrs. D. (shocked)—My dear Mrs. Crane, you don't mean that you buy loose oysters!

Mrs. C.—Why, yes, always for oyster stew.

Mrs. D. (gravely)—Don't you know those oysters come to the small markets in tubs, and they've been opened goodness knows how many weeks!

Boy—Say, lady, I wish you'd send them oysters down on the waiter!

Mrs. C.—My fish man, Mr. Mulligan, told me he opens them himself every morning.

Mrs. D.—Oh, of course, they tell you that, but I KNOW! I knew a man once who knew all about it. Why, there are millions of ptomaines lurking in a loose oyster!

Boy (indignantly)—There ain't a darned thing in 'em but oyster crabs and they're out of sight!

Mrs. C.—Oh, I don't know what to do!

Boy (threatening)—Say, lady, if you don't send them oysters down quick all de juice'll be gone up at de store!

Mrs. C. (tremulously)—Oh, dear, and I just LOVE oyster stew. You're sure about the ptomaines, aren't you, Mrs. Davis?

Mrs. D. (coldly)—Why, certainly I am! But if you want to take the risk, of course it's nothing to me!

(Mrs. Crane sadly places the damp box on the waiter.)

Mrs. C.—You can pull it down, boy.

Boy (generously)—All right. I'll get ye a swell lot of juice, lady, an' I'll be back in a jiffy!

Mrs. C. (mournfully)—No, you needn't bring them back, boy. I don't want them.

Boy (contemptuously) — Why? Just 'cause dat dame flashes de talk 'bout de million bugs?

Mrs. D. (furious)—Don't you dare—don't you dare——

Boy (slamming cellar door)—Aw!

Hedgeville Editor

By John L. Hobbs

GEORGE FORK says that he would like to quit cussing, but the painter's trade is the only thing he can make a living at.

WHEN a man becomes certain that his wife possesses an uncertain amount of certainty he understands her about as well as he need expect.

FRED WATTS, the dentist, claims that he can make a set of false teeth that will not whistle even when you say "scissors."

THERE comes a time in every man's life when he feels a desire to slow up and let some little girl catch him.

OLD man Craum says when you have a big family to support there is very seldom a day passes that you don't have to spend something.

A WONDER WORKER.

"Your own baby, if you have one," advertised the enterprising photographer, "can be enlarged, tinted, and framed for $9.75 per dozen."—Metropolitan Magazine.